

IRAQI DESTINY

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MPs fighting for peace in streets

By Spc. Blake Kent
22nd MPAD

The war may be over, but conflict in the streets still remains along with the conflict of standing up a reputable police department.

The 503rd Military Police Battalion (Airborne) out of Fort Bragg, N.C. is helping to solve the problem.

"We really didn't get into the fight until the peace keeping operations began," said Lt. Col. Wade F. Dennis of Hitchcock, S.D., commander, 503rd MP Bn. (Abn.), "but we're now manning 14

police stations around Mosul, where we conduct joint patrols and training with the Iraqi police."

The Mosul police are in need of training and supplies in order to run their stations.

"Our primary mission is to coach, teach, and mentor the Iraqi police here in Mosul on how to be an effective police department; helping the people of Mosul and not terrorizing them," Dennis said.

"We want the people of Mosul to be able to trust their police force. Before they were just an intimidation tool of the Ba'ath Party."

"We've developed a training program where our soldiers are training the Iraqi police before shifts on common police tasks such as how to take a report and conduct a search," Dennis said.

The police are also learning how to maintain peace without the

"Police" see page 4

Bragg soldiers understand what being deployed means

By Spc. Blake Kent
22nd MPAD

For the soldiers assigned to the 503rd Military Police Battalion (Airborne), deployment isn't a question of 'if,' but 'when.'

"We've deployed or redeployed 17 times within the last two years," said Lt. Col. Wade F. Dennis of Hitchcock, S.D., commander, 503rd MP Bn. (Abn.). We went to the Pentagon after 9/11, had a company in Kosovo, a company in Uzbekistan, three companies rotate out of Kandahar, Afghanistan, and now we have our Headquarters, Headquarters Detachment and two other companies here in Mosul. Our battalion is without a doubt the most deployed battalion in the Military Police Corps, Dennis said.

The soldiers of the 503rd not

only are proficient in conducting their deployment mission, but have become accustomed to deployment living.

Spc. Timothy Wells of St. Joseph, Illinois, 2nd Platoon, 65th MP Company, 503rd, makes shelves, latrines, and showers in his free time, to relieve the stress of deployment.

"I'm just improving the quality of life for the soldiers," Wells said.

The soldiers are constantly working on improving their quality of life at the Mosul Airport, where they've established their camp, including the "Yard of the Month" held by Dennis, who is said to be seen working on the lawn surrounding his building early in the morning.

According to Dennis, a soldiers pay, food and mail are three of the most important things in keeping a high moral.

"Deployed" see page 3



Spc. Blake Kent

Spc. Timothy Wells of St. Joseph, Ill., 2nd Platoon, 65th MP Company, 503rd MP Bn. (Abn.), constructs shelves, latrines and showers, helping build the morale of his fellow soldiers while on deployment



Pfc. Mary Rose Xenikakis

Soldiers help with the distribution of propane in Bashiqa, Iraq, May 27. Villagers stand in line waiting for a bottle of propane which cost 250 dinar.

Soldiers lend a hand with distribution of propane

By Pfc. Mary Rose Xenikakis
22nd MPAD

The 101st mission is turning from war time to reconstruction. Soldiers who would normally be on front lines now interact with Iraqi people one-on-one.

Men, women and children wait in long lines under the scorching sun for hours, while soldiers assist in the distribution of propane, primarily used for cooking.

The soldiers of Fire Support Element of 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), have accomplished many missions during their time here in Iraq, but seeing the smiling faces of villagers as they carry tanks of propane back to their home is a mission with a different, yet good twist.

The FSE, following the direction of Brig. Gen. Benjamin C. Freakley, assistant division commander (operations), 101st Abn. Div. (AASlt), is providing the necessary security and ensuring propane stations are honest with their customers.

Some propane station owners have been over charging costumers for propane

to get a higher profit, according to Freakley.

"Somebody needs to stand up for the Iraqi people, and stop the corruption that's ongoing. It can't be the Coalition Forces; it has to be Iraqis," Freakley said while in a meeting with officials from the Iraqi Oil Product Distribution Company, North Branch.

According to Freakley a tank of propane sold through a distribution center should be no more than 250 dinars. When sold retail, it should be no more than 500 dinars per tank. If dealers are caught selling propane for more than 500 dinars they will be arrested.

He spoke firmly to the officials about the consequences that will come to

"Propane" see page 5

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Strike 6 surfs the radio waves in Mosul

By Spc. Joshua M. Risner
40th PAD

Col. Joseph Anderson, commander, 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, (Air Assault) took to the air waves in order to answer questions of the local populous and address what the coalition forces were doing about them, May 31.

The questions were taken from calls to the radio station and translated for Anderson to understand and reply. Then, his reply was in turn translated for broadcast.

The first question was about salaries for government officials and civil servants. "The local government is trying to pay the salaries based on a pre-war schedule," Anderson said. "There is a plan to resume payments on the same schedule once again, but negotiated at a different rate among different professions at a different pay scale."

Anderson added that the United States is trying to help through the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance by making two gratuitous payments to all civil employees.

Another question addresses the 10,000 dinar bill. Many places of business will not honor the currency. Two central banks will be exchanging the 10,000 dinar bills for smaller ones, according to Anderson. "We're also trying to get more smaller bills in circulation," he said. "We all must put faith back into the value of the dinar to be successful."

The education system was another issue that the people pressed. Schools in Mosul are scheduled to run until June 21,



Spc. Joshua M. Risner

Col. Joseph Anderson answers questions with the help of Mahir Hazem, CMOC-PAO Media Specialist, about the needs, concerns and wants of the people of Mosul Saturday.

according to Anderson. There are two main problems the education system is currently facing. One is the lack of a government testing schedule because of the absence of a central government. The other is a curriculum in need of change based on newfound democracy and freedom, he added.

The people also wanted to know about employment and if they still had jobs. Anderson replied by saying that all former employees needed to return to work. "This province continues to be in front of everyone else in the country as we continue to solve these problems," he said. A question of a different sort arose about whether Iraqi citizens could obtain passports. "Governor Al-Basso is working

to issue temporary documents for citizens to travel freely across borders," Anderson said. Once the central government has been established, all borders and embassies will re-open, he added.

Other issues were brought up such as traffic, damage to the local infrastructure, rations and fuel. Anderson replied that the issues were being looked into and improvements will be made.

Anderson also added that citizens with issues need to bring it to someone's attention. "The United Nations works to support everyone in the city and they have a headquarters across from the university," he said. "Another place to get assistance is the Civil Military Operations Center at the Nineveh Hotel."

"Deployed" continued from page 1

"We get them money, we have the best chow hall, and we're just trying to get the mail situation worked out," Dennis said.

"Our dinning hall is one of our biggest morale boosters with the great atmosphere and food that they produce. Our mission could not be conducted without our support personnel."

The dinning facilities are established in a building on the airfield, providing a large dinning hall with tables and chairs, and a kitchen which the DFAC personnel keep spotless.

"I think because we're all from the same unit here, we

have camaraderie, where a lot of the other chow halls around here are groups of units put together," said Sgt. Marlon Harris of Brownsville, N.J., 108th MP Co., 503rd MP Bn. "Tonight we're having steak, baked beans, vegetables and pudding. It's better than an MRE."

All the comforts don't deter from the soldiers conducting their mission though.

They have been training the Mosul police, conducting patrols and providing force protection.

"Our primary mission is to coach, teach and mentor the Iraqi police here in Mosul on how to be an effective police department – helping the people of Mosul and not terrorizing them," Dennis said. "This is one of the most gratifying missions we've been on."

New program implemented for handling of mass grave sites

In Northern Iraq many mass grave sites have been identified. With direction from the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance, Coalition members, international and nongovernmental organizations and local Iraqis implemented a four step program.

This four step program has been put into operation to help families find missing relatives and preserve evidence for future prosecutions against perpetrators by the new Iraqi government.

Step One: Public Awareness and Site Assessment

- ORHA has initiated a media campaign and is working with local and religious leaders to explain to the public why it is necessary to preserve the grave sites.
- A team of forensic experts from the United States have arrived to assess the sites and determine security needs. They will work with other Coalition assessment teams.

Step Two: Security and Support

- To strike the delicate balance between the interest of families searching for loved ones and broader justice issues, ORHA has the following approach.

- At sites, such as Al Hillah where extensive digging has already begun, ORHA will deploy humanitarian response teams.

- The teams will work with local leaders to coordinate an orderly digging process; encourage detailed examinations of personal effects; assist in implantation of system to keep records of identified remains; implement a process for providing death certificates and conducting witness interviews; and facilitate documentation of information found at the sites.

- Military at these sites will help inform the families of the importance of careful exhumation, and provide them with water, shade, plastic bags, gloves and mask.

- At sites that have not been subject to extensive digging, ORHA will hire local Iraqis to guard the graves, and deploy humanitarian response teams to meet with families who appear at the site to explain identification and reburial of remains.

- Forensic investigative teams from the Coalition will follow the assessment teams to conduct exhumations of grave sites. They will be coordinating out of ORHA offices and will hire and train local Iraqis to help.

Step three: Identification

- ORHA will work with existing Iraqi organizations to establish an Iraqi Committee for Missing Persons (ICMP), which will collect the records of Iraqis who have disappeared and compile a national database to integrate the information with findings of the forensic investigative teams.

- In connection with ICMP, ORHA will create a national outreach program for families.

Step four: Prosecution

- Prosecution of crimes against humanity committed by the former regime will be conducted through an Iraqi-led process assisted and supported by the international community as needed

- To ensure that prosecutors have the access to evidence, ORHA will form an evidence coordination team. The team will create centralized and systematic warehouse for storages, documentation and preservation of evidence.

- The teams will train local experts in handling and preservation of forensic evidence.

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"Police" continued from page 1

use of violence.

"They don't really have levels of force like us," said Spc. Danilo Fernandez of New York, N.Y., 2nd Plt., 65th MP Co., "they're used to jumping out of their trucks like cowboys, weapons blazing, while weapons are a last resort for us."

Training isn't the only task in helping the police department.

"I think they pretty much know what they should do," said Spc. Brett Fagan of Lubbock, Texas, 2nd Plt., 65th MP Co. "It's getting all the bad police officers out of the system. A lot of the higher ranking police officers are being fired because of the way they run the police department. You can't enforce laws that you aren't following yourself."

Corruption in the department hampers their goal in improving relations within the community.

"They use their power to get what they want, like black-market fuel," Fagan said. These type guys are getting fired. We're helping them to build a respectable reputation."

The soldiers know they are making a long-term difference in the city of Mosul.

"This is one of the most gratifying missions we've been on," Dennis said. "The older generations still seem a little

unsure of us, but the children are very supportive.

"We make sure to take time for the children because they are the future of this country, and this is our opportunity to show them that we do care about them."

"This deployment gives a sense of fulfillment," said Spc. Timothy Wells of St. Joseph, Ill., 2nd Plt., 65th MP Co., 503rd MP Bn. (Abn.). "You get to interact with the people out in the city. We're always happier when we're out patrolling.

The MPs job isn't easy physically or mentally.

"You get so overwhelmed when you see these people," said Pfc. William Barbier of Jacksonville, Fla., 3rd Plt. 511th MPs from Fort Drum, N.Y., attached to 503rd MP Bn. "You want to stop and help them right there, but there are so many in need that it's just impossible. Change is going to take time and that's how we have to work."

"It's been a very diverse and demanding experience," Fernandez said. "We haven't really run into any problems though, and everybody has been doing their job and no one has gotten hurt, so it has been good."

The MPs job never ends, home or abroad they are always busy.

According to Dennis, "It's the same MPs that protect the gates and the streets back at Bragg, so we definitely stay busy, deployed and at home."

Amnesty policy in affect for citizens of Ninawa

By Spc. Joshua M. Risner
40th PAD

Coalition forces have created an amnesty policy for turning in arms and munitions for citizens who may possess them starting June 1.

The policy is geared toward law and order and keeping the streets and citizens safe, according to Col. Joseph Anderson, commander, 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, (Air Assault).

Heavy weapons such as rocket propelled grenades, mortars, explosives and heavy machine guns are now illegal to own, Anderson added.

"Only the following people are authorized to possess heavy

weapons: coalition forces, police, security and military forces in uniform or under the supervision of coalition forces and limited to the possession of only those heavy weapons which coalition forces permit them to possess for the execution of their official duties," he said.

Unauthorized heavy weapons will be seized and confiscated whenever and wherever they are found, Anderson said.

"Small arms may still be kept in homes and businesses," Anderson said, "but they must remain at these locations and may not be taken out in public."

People that are authorized to carry small arms must carry them openly, Anderson added. "Only authorized police and personnel security forces may carry a concealed weapon," he said.

Those people who demonstrate that they need to carry small arms in connection with their duties may apply for a temporary weapons card, according to Anderson.

These people must demonstrate that need during the application process.

They must also sign either a denunciation or disavowal of the Ba'ath Party, if ever a member, to receive the card.

Those who have a temporary weapons card

must keep it on their person while carrying a weapon, Anderson added.

People who are unauthorized to have weapons have a two week amnesty period to turn in weapons at local police stations.

"Those who turn in weapons before sundown, June 14 will not be prosecuted for possession of banned weapons," Anderson said.

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-- Col. Joseph Anderson

Weapons listing

Heavy Weapons:

Weapons firing ammunition larger than 7.62mm. Examples: heavy machine guns, crew-served weapons, anti-tank weapons i.e. RPGs; anti-aircraft weapons i.e. missiles, anti aircraft guns; mortars, artillery, all armored vehicles, high explosives, grenades and mines; only authorized personnel may possess.

Small Arms:

Weapons 7.62mm or smaller. Examples: automatic rifles firing up to 7.62mm, semi-automatic rifles, shotguns and pistols; Small arms may be kept in homes and businesses, but not carried in public, only authorized personnel allowed to carry in public.

"Propane" continued from page 2

anyone who continues to take advantage of the people of Iraq by over charging for propane.

Maj. David J. Ell, fire support officer, FSE, 2nd Bde, 101st Abn. Div. (AASlt), said we're trying to help the Iraqi people not hurt them. By selling propane at an inflated price Iraqi businessmen in villages outside of Mosul are making their own people suffer by forcing them to drive to Mosul to get their propane.

Ell told the manager of a propane station where the FSE helped with the distribution of a truck load of propane to the people of Bashiqa, Iraq, Tuesday

"If you don't start selling the propane at the price agreed on, which is 250 dinar, you will be fired and this business will be shut down."

Propane is an essential expendable product for the people of Iraq.

"If you don't have propane you can't cook anything," said Jaklean Sulaiman, translator.

Army officials say a tank of propane lasts approximately 10 days.

"I'm hoping that by the day's end every family here will have a bottle of propane," Ell said.

The people of Bashiqa, a smaller town east of Mosul known for its olive orchards, showed their appreciation for the Coalition Forces to the soldiers of FSE by

giving smiles and thanking them.

"We want to thank you for helping us get back what we've lost, like the simplest necessities of life. We want you to continue giving us peace and safety in the future," said Olivea K. Elias, Bashiqa school teacher.

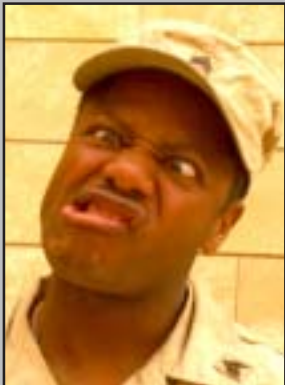
"We're helping children get hot food in their stomachs at night," said Sgt 1st Class Bobby A. Perdue Jr., fire support noncommissioned officer in charge, FSE, 2nd Bde, 101st Abn. Div. (AASlt).

According to Perdue the fire support element has made a major impact on the black market in Mosul, Iraq, and its surrounding areas and they've help control the cost of the propane being sold to the villagers.

War Faces



Spc. Joshua M. Risner, 40th Public Affairs Detachment, Fort Campbell, Ky.



Sgt. William Byrd, 244th Air Defense Artillery, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Fort Campbell, Ky.



Chief Warrant Officer 2 Stuart R. Allen, targeting officer, 2nd Brigade, Fire Support Element, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Fort Campbell, Ky.



Maj. David J. Ell, fire support officer, 2nd Brigade, Fire Support Officer, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Fort Campbell, Ky.



Spc. Blake Kent

Col. William Greer commissions his son as a 2nd lieutenant into the Army through the use of modern technology.

Technology connects family for graduation

By Spc. Blake Kent
22nd MPAD

Deployed to Iraq on one of the biggest days in an officers life, his son's Army commissioning, Col. William Greer of Elk City, Kan., commander, 101st Airborne Division Artillery (Air Assault), said "A soldier's duty always comes first."

Greer deployed to Iraq knowing he wouldn't be home to see his son, Lester Greer, graduate from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., and pin on his 2nd lieutenant bars. Instead he would find himself looking over the Tigris River from the remnants of one of Saddam's palaces on the outskirts of Mosul.

Modern technology allowed Greer to participate though. A teleconference was arranged for the family so that Greer could read his son the oath of commissioning and see his family pin on his rank.

"I wasn't expecting to be able to do this," Greer said. "It's great to have the technology that allows us to do this."

"My parents came to my commissioning 25 years and a couple of days ago," Greer said, reminiscing on his own commissioning, a tradition his son is now participating in.

Greer was able to not only speak to his family and friends, but could also see them, while his family and friends could see Greer with the backdrop of the Tigris.

"It's great having family and friends. There is nothing better than knowing they are back in America supporting what we're doing," Greer said.

Greer's other son, Robert Greer, is attending West Point currently as well, with plans to graduate next year.

"The good Lord willing and the creek don't rise, I'll be there for your graduation," Greer said to Robert, in hopes that he will be able to attend his graduation in person.

Greer put back on his commander's hat before returning to his work, reminding his family of safety on their weekend celebration.

"Force protection is an individual responsibility," Greer said, "so take care this weekend."

"Are you commanding your family?" Mrs. Greer said.

"All but you my dear," Greer said, "All but you."

"It's really neat to be able to do this," Lester said. "It's a very important day for me and I'm glad my dad can participate in it, even from so far away."